

Richards Topical Encyclopedia

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FOREWORD TO INDEX

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TO BE READ BEFORE USING THE INDEX

WHEN you are driving along a country road and want to find a particular place, you look at the guide posts. They tell you nothing about the place, of course, but they do tell you where to find it. Now that is what an index does. It tells you where to find the information you are looking for—which volume it is in and what page it is on.

We do not mean to suggest, however, that there is no other information in the index. There is a great deal of it. The names of persons, hundreds and hundreds of them—saints, monarchs, artists, authors—are given in the index with their full names and titles, and often their nicknames too, so without sending you any further, the index can give you a certain amount of information about them. For instance, if you want to know Buddha's real name, you will find it in parenthesis after Buddha. Dante's Beatrice is entered under B, but her family name follows.

Geographical names also give you information: that Mount Etna is a volcano and in Sicily and that the Cordilleras are a mountain chain in America. All places, except towns, which are followed by their location only, are given their descriptive term of state, river, lake, etc., as well as the name of the country in which they are found.

Now as to the information in the articles themselves. The index was planned to include all that was worth while. Sometimes a name is indexed even when the article tells very little about it. Suppose only a few lines of text are given to a king. One still learns a good deal about him by looking at him against his background of time and place—his dates, dynasty, relative importance, predecessors, and heirs.

It is simple enough to find specific subjects. If you are interested in moths, turn to M for full information, but if it is only the emperor moth that you are searching for, you will find it under E. Suppose, however, that you want to learn all that you can, not about moths but about insects in general. The search will be even more interesting. Insects, like all main headings, will be in very black type. Then there will be a number of secondary headings such as *bees*, *butterflies*, *mosquitoes*, etc., all of them set a little to the right and arranged alphabetically, one under the other. But before turning to the index to see how the arrangement works keep this in mind:

1—Very black type means three things—the subject or name, the main articles under the subject, and the volume numbers.

2—An asterisk (*) before the page number refers to a picture and its explanation only, while an obelisk (†) refers to illustrated text.

Though nearly all of the subdivisions in the index are in alphabetical order, there are a few cases in which it has seemed better to use another arrangement. The main article

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or most important reference follows the main index entry. Where there is more than one reference of importance immediately following the main entry, they are listed according to their importance. This has been done with dates when there are many historical entries under important countries. But you will see that for yourself

There are four approaches to fact finding in Richards Topical Encyclopedia. Until the reader is thoroughly familiar with these short cuts he should go to the General Index first. Soon, however, he will use the other short cuts, depending upon the kind of information he is seeking. If, for example, he wants to read the complete story of Communication, he simply takes the volume which is stamped on the backbone "Communication." Now, if he wants to read only about the Telegraph, he consults the Contents in the front of the book which indicate the place where the Telegraph article may be found. If, however, he is interested only in the first message telegraphed, he consults the unit page preceding the unit on the Telegraph and finds the exact page where this phase of the subject is discussed

There are countless interesting things an index can help you to find, for instance, which museum will send you pamphlets on Indian customs and crafts. Turn to Indians and run down the list of subentries until you find: customs and crafts, pamphlets about. There you will find the page reference. If you want to know the meaning of foreign terms, such as "café au lait," or the name of the fish that carries bait and light, or the goldsmith who became a patron saint, just look up the words that would naturally occur to you—café, fishing tackle, goldsmiths--and you can get the page number and satisfy your curiosity at once.

Of course you will want to find *puzzles* and *games* and *tricks* and *things to make and do*. They will all come under their own special headings unless it has seemed best to combine two groups, in that case a reference under one will refer to the other. Games, for instance, are under *Sports and games*, a black-type heading that is followed by an alphabetical list of the sports and games by name.

E. W

New York

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